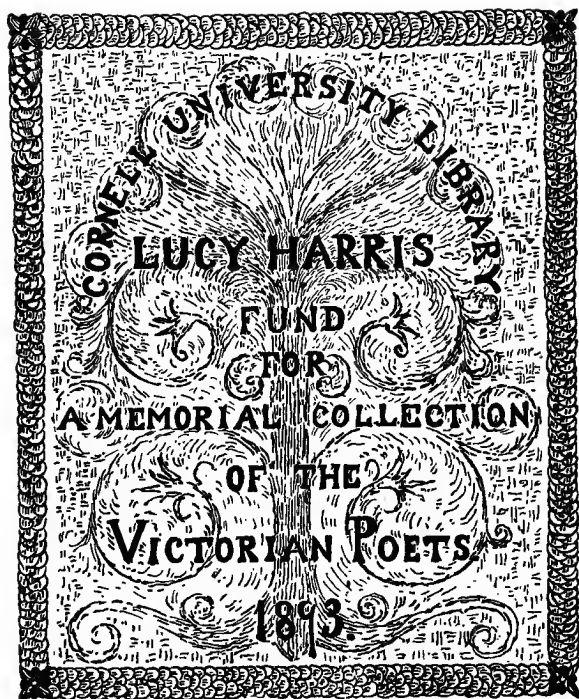


THE DOOR OF  
HUMILITY  
ALFRED AUSTIN  
POET LAUREATE



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## THE DOOR OF HUMILITY



# THE DOOR OF HUMILITY

BY

ALFRED AUSTIN

POET LAUREATE

"I am for the House with the Narrow Gate, which I take to be  
too little for pomp to enter. Some that humble themselves, may."

*All's Well That Ends Well.*

"Non la ci tolse qualità di gelo,  
Nè di calor, siccome l'altre face,  
Ma sola fu sua gran benignitate."

*La Vita Nuova.*

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1906

PS

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A.270619

ENGLAND

*WE lead the blind by voice and hand,  
And not by light they cannot see ;  
We are not framed to understand  
The How and Why of such as He ;*

*But natured only to rejoice  
At every sound or sign of hope,  
And, guided by the still small voice,  
In patience through the darkness grope ;*

*Until our finer sense expands,  
And we exchange for holier sight  
The earthly help of voice and hands,  
And in His light behold the Light.*

## THE DOOR OF HUMILITY

### I

#### i

LET there be Light ! The self-same Power  
That out of formless dark and void  
Endued with life's mysterious dower  
Planet, and star, and asteroid ;

#### ii

That moved upon the waters' face,  
And, breathing on them His intent,  
Divided, and assigned their place  
To, ocean, air, and firmament ;

#### iii

That bade the land appear, and bring  
Forth herb and leaf, both fruit and flower,  
Cattle that graze, and birds that sing,  
Ordained the sunshine and the shower ;

## iv

That, moulding man and woman, breathed  
In them an active soul at birth  
In His own image, and bequeathed  
To them dominion over Earth ;

## v

That, by whatever is, decreed  
His Will and Word shall be obeyed,  
From loftiest star to lowliest seed ;—  
The worm and me He also made.

## vi

And when, for nuptials of the Spring  
With Summer, on the vestal thorn  
The bridal veil hung flowering,  
A cry was heard, and I was born.

## II

## i

To be by blood and long descent  
A member of a mighty State,  
Whose greatness, sea-girt, but unpent  
By ocean, makes the world more great ;

## ii

That, ranging limitless, hath won  
A Rule more wide than that of Rome,  
And, journeying onward with the sun,  
In every zone hath found a home ;

## iii

That, keeping old traditions fast,  
Still hails the things that are to be,  
And, firmly rooted in the Past,  
On Law hath grafted Liberty ;—

6 THE DOOR OF HUMILITY

iv

That is a birthright nobler far  
Than princely claim or Right Divine  
From far-off rapine, wanton war,  
And I could feel this birthright mine.

v

And not the lowliest hand that drives  
Or share or loom, if so it be  
Of British strain, but thence derives  
A patent of nobility.

## III

## i

THE guiding of the infant years  
Onward to good, away from guile,  
A mother's humanising tears,  
A father's philosophic smile ;

## ii

Refining beauty, gentle ways,  
The admonitions of the wise,  
The love that watches, helps, and prays,  
And pities, but doth ne'er despise ;

## iii

An ancient Faith, abiding hope,  
The charity that suffers long,  
But flames with sacred zeal to cope  
With man's injustice, nature's wrong ;

## iv

Melodious leisure, learned shelf,  
Discourse of earnest, temperate mind,  
The playful wit that of itself  
Flashes, but leaves no wound behind ;

## v

The knowledge gleaned from Greece and Rome,  
From studious Teuton, sprightly Gaul,  
The lettered page, the mellow tome,  
And poets' wisdom more than all ;—

## vi

These, when no lips severe upbraid,  
But counsel rather than control,  
In budding boyhood lend their aid  
To sensibility of soul.

## IV

## i

BUT, more than mentor, mother, sire,  
Can lend to shape the future man  
With help of learning or of lyre,  
Of ancient rule, or modern plan,

## ii

Is that which with our breath we bring  
Into the world, we know not whence,  
That needs nor care nor fostering,  
Because an instinct and a sense.

## iii

And days and years are all forgot  
When Nature's aspect, growth, and grace,  
And veering moods, to me were not  
The features of the Loved One's face.

## iv

The cloud whose shadow skims the lake,  
The shimmering haze of summer noon,  
The voice of April in the brake,  
The silence of the mounting moon,

## v

Swaying of bracken on the hill,  
The murmur of the vagrant stream,  
These motions of some unseen Will,  
These babblings of some heavenly dream,

## vi

Seemed tokens of divine desire  
To hold discourse with me, and so  
To touch my lips with hallowed fire,  
And tell me things I ought to know.

## vii

I gazed and listened, all intent,  
As to the face and voice of Fate,  
But what they said, or what they meant,  
I could surmise not, nor translate.

## viii

They did but lure me to unrest,  
Unanswered questioning, longings vain,  
As when one scans some palimpsest  
No erudition can explain ;

## ix

But left me with a deep distaste  
For common speech, that still did seem  
More meaningless than mountain waste,  
Less human than the far-off stream.

## x

So that a stranger in the land  
Wherein I moved, where'er I went,  
I dwelt, whom none could understand,  
Or exorcise my discontent.

## xi

And I to them, and they to me  
Seemed from two different planets come,  
And, save to flower and wild-bird's glee,  
My heart was deaf, my soul was dumb.

## V

## i

BUT slowly dawned a happier time  
When I began to apprehend,  
And catch, as in some poet's rhyme,  
The intimations of a friend ;

## ii

When Nature spake no unknown tongue,  
But language kindred to my thought,  
Till everything She said, I sung,  
In notes unforced, in words unsought.

## iii

And I to Her so closely drew,  
The seasons round, in mind and mood,  
I felt at length as if we knew  
Self-same affection, self-same feud :

## iv

That both alike scorned worldly aim,  
Profit, applause, parade, and pride,  
Whereby the love of generous fame  
And worthy deeds grows petrified.

## v

I did as yet not understand  
Nature is far more vast than I,  
Deep as the ocean, wide as land,  
And overarching as the sky ;

## vi

And but responded to my call,  
And only felt and fed my need,  
Because She doth the same for all  
Who to her pity turn and plead.

## VI

## i

SHALL man have mind, and Nature none,  
Shall I, not she, have soul and heart ?  
Nay, rather, if we be not one,  
Each is of each the counterpart.

## ii

She too may have within her breast  
A conscience, if not like to yours,  
A sense of rightness ill at rest,  
Long as her waywardness endures.

## iii

And hence her thunder, earthquakes, hail,  
Her levin bolts, her clouds' discharge :  
She sins upon a larger scale,  
Because She is herself more large.

iv

Hence, too, when She hath pierced with pain  
 The heart of man, and wrecked his years,  
 The pity of the April rain,  
 And late repentance of her tears.

v

She is no better, worse, than we ;  
 We can but say she seems more great,  
 That half her will, like ours, is free,  
 And half of it is locked in Fate.

vi

Nor need we fear that we should err  
 Beyond our scope in reasoning thus,—  
 That there must be a God for Her,  
 If that there be a God for us.

## VII

## i

THE chiming of the Sabbath bell,  
The silence of the Sabbath fields,  
Over the hamlet cast a spell  
To which the gracious spirit yields.

## ii

Sound is there none of wheel or wain,  
Husht stands the anvil, husht the forge,  
No shout is heard in rustic lane,  
No axe resounds in timbered gorge.

## iii

No flail beats time on granary floor,  
The windmill's rushing wings are stayed,  
And children's glee rings out no more  
From hedgerow bank or primrose glade.

iv

The big-boned team that firm and slow  
 Draw yoked, are free to couch or stray ;  
 The basking covey seem to know  
 None will invade their peace to-day.

v

And speckless swains, and maidens neat,  
 Through rustic porch, down cottage stair,  
 Demurely up the village street  
 Stream onward to the House of Prayer.

vi

They kneel as they were taught to kneel  
 In childhood, and demand not why,  
 But, as they chant or answer, feel  
 A vague communion with the sky.

## VIII

## i

BUT when the impetuous mind is spurred  
To range through epochs great but gone,  
And, heedless of dogmatic word,  
With fearless ardour presses on,

## ii

Confronting pulpit, sceptre, shrine,  
With point by Logic beaten out,  
And, questioning tenets deemed divine  
With human challenge, human doubt,

## iii

Hoists Reason's sail, and for the haze  
Of ocean quits Tradition's shore,  
Awhile he comes, and kneels, and prays,  
Then comes and kneels, but prays no more ;

iv

And only for the love he bears  
To those who love him, and who reared  
His frame to genuflexion, shares  
In ritual, vain, if still revered.

v

His Gods are many or are none,  
Saturn and Mithra, Christ and Jove,  
Consorting, as the Ages run,  
With Vestal choir or Pagan drove.

vi

Abiding still by Northern shores,  
He sees far off on Grecian coast  
Veiled Aphrodite, but adores  
Minerva and Apollo most.

vii

Beauty of vision, voice, and mind,  
Enthrall him so, that unto him  
All Creeds seem true, if he but find  
Siren, or saint, or seraphim.

viii

And thus once more he dwells apart,  
His inward self enswathed in mist,  
Blending with poet's pious heart  
The dreams of pagan Hedonist.

## IX

## i

IF Beauty be the Spirit's quest,  
Its adoration, creed, and shrine,  
Wherein its restlessness finds rest,  
And earthly type of the Divine,

## ii

Must there for such not somewhere be  
A blending of all beauteous things  
In some one form wherein we see  
The sum of our imaginings ?

## iii

The smile on mountain's musing brow,  
Sunrise and sunset, moon and star,  
Wavelets around the cygnet's prow,  
Glamour anear and charm afar ;

## iv

The silence of the silvery pool,  
Autumn's reserve and Summer's fire,  
Slow vanishings of Winter's rule  
To free full voice of April's choir ;—

## v

The worshippers of Beauty find  
In maiden form, and face, and tress ;  
Faint intimations of her mind  
And undulating loveliness.

## X

## i

BOUND, runnels, bound, bound on, and flow !  
 Sing, merle and mavis, pair and sing !  
 Gone is the Winter, fled the snow,  
 And all that lives is flushed with Spring.

## ii

Harry the woods, young truant folk,  
 For flowers to deck your cottage sills,  
 And, underneath my orchard oak,  
 Cluster, ye golden daffodils !

## iii

Unfettered by domestic vow,  
 Cuckoo, proclaim your vagrant loves,  
 And coo upon the self-same bough,  
 Inseparable turtle-doves.

## iv

Soar, laverock, soar on song to sky,  
And with the choir of Heaven rejoice !  
You cannot be more glad than I,  
Who feel Her gaze, and hear Her voice :

## v

Who see Her cheek more crimson glow,  
And through Her veins love's current  
stream,  
And feel a fear She doth but know  
Is kin to joy and dawning dream.

## vi

Bound, rivulets, bound, bound on, and flow !  
Sing, merle and mavis, pair and sing !  
Gone from the world are want and woe,  
And I myself am one with Spring.

## XI

## i

THEY err who say that Love is blind,  
Or, if it be, 'tis but in part,  
And that, if for fair face it find  
No counterpart in mind and heart,

## ii

It dwells on that which it beholds,  
Fair fleshly vision void of soul,  
Deeming, illusioned, this enfolds,  
Longing's fulfilment, end, and whole.

## iii

Were such my hapless carnal lot,  
I too might evanescent bliss  
Embrace, fierce-fancied, fast forgot,  
Then leave for some fresh loveliness.

## iv

But April gaze, and Summer tress,  
With something of Autumnal thought,  
In Her seem blent to crown and bless  
A bond I long in dreams have sought.

## v

She looks as though She came to grace  
The earth, from world less soiled than this,  
Around her head and virgin face  
Halo of heavenly holiness.

## XII

## i

HE who hath roamed through various lands,  
And, wheresoe'er his steps are set,  
The kindred meaning understands  
Of spire, and dome, and minaret ;

## ii

By Roman river, Stamboul's sea,  
In Peter's or Sophia's shrine,  
Acknowledges with reverent knee  
The presence of the One Divine ;

## iii

Who, to the land he loves so well  
Returning, towards the sunset hour  
Wends homeward, feels yet stronger spell  
In lichen'd roof and grey church-tower ;

iv

Round whose foundations, side by side,  
Sleep hamlet wit and village sage,  
While loud the blackbird cheers his bride  
Deep in umbrageous Vicarage.

## XIII

## i

WAS it that sense which some aver  
    Foreshadows Fate it doth not see,  
That gave unwittingly to Her  
    The name, for ever dear to me,

## ii

Borne by that tearful Mother whom,  
    Nigh unto Ostia's shelving sand,  
Augustine lay in lonely tomb,  
    Ere sailing for his Afric land ?

## iii

But I at least should have foreseen,  
    When Monica to me had grown  
Familiar word, that names may mean  
    More than by word and name is shown ;

iv

That nought can keep two lives apart  
More than divorce 'twixt mind and mind,  
Even though heart be one with heart ;—  
Alas ! Alas ! Yes, Love is blind.

## XIV

## i

How could I think of jarring Creeds,  
And riddles that unread remain,  
Or ask if Heaven's indulgence heeds  
Broils born of man's polemic brain,

## ii

And pause because my venturous mind  
Had roamed through tracks of polar thought,  
Whence mightiest spirits turn back blind,  
Since finding not the thing they sought,

## iii

When Love, with luring gifts in hand,  
Beauty, refinement, smile, caress,  
Heart to surmise and understand,  
And crowning grace of holiness,

## iv

Stood there before me, and, with gaze  
I had been purblind not to see,  
Said, "I to you will, all my days,  
Give what you yearn to give to me" ?

## v

Must both then sorrow, while we live,  
Because, rejoicing, I forgot  
Something there was I could not give,  
Because, alas ! I had it not.

XV

i

SHE comes from Vicarage Garden, see !  
 Radiant as morning, lithe and tall,  
 Fresh lilies in her hand, but She  
 The loveliest lily of them all.

ii

The thrushes in their fluting pause,  
 The bees float humming round her head,  
 Earth, air, and heaven shine out because  
 They hear her voice, and feel her tread.

iii

Up in the fretted grey church-tower,  
 That rustic gaze for miles can see,  
 The belfry strikes the silvery hour,  
 Announcing her propinquity.

## iv

And I who, fearful to be late,  
Passed long since through the deerpark pale,  
And loitered by the churchyard gate,  
Once more exclaim, "Hail! loved one! hail!"

## v

We pass within, and up the nave,  
Husht, because Heaven seems always there,  
Wend choirward, where, devoutly grave,  
She kneels, to breathe a silent prayer.

## vi

She takes the flowers I too have brought,  
Blending them deftly with her own,  
And ranges them, as quick as thought,  
Around the white-draped altar-throne.

## vii

How could she know my gaze was not  
On things unseen, but fixed on Her,  
That, as She prayed, I all forgot  
The worship in the worshipper?—

viii

While She beheld, as in a glass,  
The Light Divine, that I but sought  
Sight of her soul ?—Alas ! Alas !  
Love is yet blinder than I thought.

## XVI

## i

Who hath not seen a little cloud  
Up from the clear horizon steal,  
And, mounting lurid, mutter loud  
Premonitory thunder-peal ?

## ii

Husht grows the grove, the summer leaf  
Trembles and writhes, as if in pain,  
And then the sky, o'ercharged with grief,  
Bursts into drenching tears of rain.

## iii

I through the years had sought to hide  
My darkening doubts from simple sight.  
'Tis sacrilegious to deride  
Faith of unquestioning neophyte.

## iv

And what, methought, is Doubt at best ?  
A sterile wind through seeded sedge  
Blowing for nought, an empty nest  
That lingers in a leafless hedge.

## v

Pain, too, there is we should not share  
With others lest it mar their joy ;  
There is a quiet bliss in prayer  
None but the heartless would destroy.

## vi

But just as Love is quick divined  
From heightened glow or visage pale,  
The meditations of the Mind  
Disclose themselves through densest veil.

## vii

And 'tis the unloving and least wise  
Who through life's inmost precincts press,  
And with unsympathetic eyes  
Outrage our sacred loneliness.

viii

Then, when their sacrilegious gaze  
The mournful void hath half surmised,  
To some more tender soul they raise  
The veil of ignorance it prized.

†

XVII

i

“WHAT though I write farewell I could  
 Not utter, lest your gaze should chide,  
 ’Twill by your love be understood  
 My love is still, dear, at your side.

ii

“Nor must we meet to speak goodbye,  
 Lest that my Will should lose its choice,  
 And conscience waver, for then I  
 Should see your face and hear your voice.

iii

“But, when you find yourself once more,  
 Come back, come back and look for *me*,  
 Beside the little lowly door,  
 The Doorway of Humility.”

## XVIII

## i

THERE ! Peace at last ! The far-off roar  
 Of human passion dies away.  
 “ Welcome to our broad shade once more,”  
 The waning woodlands seem to say :

## ii

The music of the vagrant wind,  
 That wandered aimlessly, is stilled ;  
 The songless branches all remind  
 That Summer's glory is fulfilled.

## iii

The fluttering of the falling leaves  
 Dimples the leaden pool awhile ;  
 So Age impassively receives  
 Youth's tale of troubles with a smile.

iv

Thus, as the seasons steal away,  
How much is schemed, how little done,  
What splendid plans at break of day !  
What void regrets at set of sun !

v

The world goes round, for you, for me,  
For him who sleeps, for him who strives,  
And the cold Fates indifferent see  
Crowning or failure of our lives.

vi

Then fall, ye leaves, fade, summer breeze !  
Grow, sedges, sere on every pool !  
Let each old glowing impulse freeze,  
Let each old generous project cool !

vii

It is not wisdom, wit, nor worth,  
Self-sacrifice nor friendship true,  
Makes venal devotees of earth  
Prostrate themselves and worship you.

## viii

The consciousness of sovran powers,  
The stubborn purpose, steadfast will,  
Have ever, in this world of ours,  
Achieved success, achieve it still.

## ix

Farewell, ye woods ! No more I sit ;  
Great voices in the distance call.  
If this be peace, enough of it !  
I go. Fall, unseen foliage, fall !

## XIX

## i

NAY, but repress rebellious woe !  
In grief 'tis not that febrile fool,  
Passion, that can but overthrow,  
But Resignation, that should rule.

## ii

In patient sadness lurks a gift  
To purify the life it stings,  
And, as the days move onward, lift  
The lonely heart to loftier things ;

## iii

Bringing within one's ripening reach  
The sceptre of majestic Thought,  
Wherefrom one slowly learns to teach  
The Wisdom to oneself it taught.

## iv

And unto what can man aspire,  
On earth, more worth the striving for,  
Than to be Reason's loftier lyre,  
And reconciling monitor ;

## v

To strike a more resounding string  
And deeper notes of joy and pain,  
Than such as but lamenting sing,  
Or warble but a sensuous strain :

## vi

So, when my days are nearly sped,  
And my last harvest labours done,  
That I may have around my head  
The halo of a setting sun.

## vii

Yet even if be heard above  
Such selfish hope, presumptuous claim,  
Better one hour of perfect love  
Than an eternity of Fame !

XX

i

WHERE then for grief seek out the cure?  
 What scenes will bid my smart to cease?  
 High peaks should teach one to endure,  
 And lakes secluded bring one peace.

ii

Farewell awhile, then, village bells,  
 Autumnal wood and harvest wain!  
 And welcome, as it sinks or swells,  
 The music of the mighty main,

iii

That seems to say, now loud, now low,  
 Rising or falling, sweet or shrill,  
 "I pace, a sentry, to and fro,  
 To guard your Island fortress still."

## iv

The roses falter on their stalk,  
The late peach reddens on the wall,  
The flowers along the garden walk  
Unheeded fade, unheeded fall.

## v

My gates unopened drip with rain,  
The wolf-hound wends from floor to floor,  
And, listening for my voice in vain,  
Waileth along the corridor.

## vi

Within the old accustomed place  
Where we so oft were wont to be,  
Kneeling She prays, while down her face  
The fruitless tears fall silently.

# SWITZERLAND

.



## XXI

### i

RAIN, wind, and rain. The writhing lake  
Scuds to and fro to scape their stroke :  
The mountains veil their heads, and make  
Of cloud and mist a wintry cloak.

### ii

Through where the arching pinewoods make  
Dusk cloisters down the mountain side,  
The loosened avalanches take  
Valeward their way, with death for guide,

### iii

And toss their shaggy manes and fling  
To air their foam and tawny froth,  
From ledge and precipice bound and spring,  
With hungry roar and deepening wrath ;

## iv

Till, hamlet homes and orchards crushed,  
And, rage for further ravin stayed,  
They slumber, satiated, husht,  
Upon the ruins they have made.

## v

I rise from larch-log hearth, and, lone,  
Gaze on the spears of serried rain,  
That faster, nigher, still are blown,  
Then stream adown the window pane.

## vi

The peasant's goatskin garments drip,  
As home he wends with lowered head,  
Shakes off the drops from lid and lip,  
Then slinks within his châlet shed.

## vii

The cattle bells sound dull and hoarse,  
The boats rock idly by the shore ;  
Only the swollen torrents course  
With faster feet and fuller roar.

viii

Mournful, I shape a mournful song,  
And ask the heavens, but ask in vain,  
“How long, how long?” Ah! not so long  
As, in my heart, rain, wind, and rain.

## XXII

## i

I ASK the dark, the dawn, the sun,  
The domeward-pointing peaks of snow,  
Lofty and low alike, but none  
Will tell me what I crave to know.

## ii

My mind demands, "Whence, Whither,  
Why?"  
From mountain slope and green defile,  
And wait the answer. The reply—  
A far-off irresponsible smile.

## iii

I ask the stars, when mortals sleep,  
The pensive moon, the lonely winds;  
But, haply if they know, they keep  
The secret of secluded minds.

iv

Shall I in vain, then, strive to find,  
 Straining towards merely fancied goal ?  
 Where in the lily lurks the mind,  
 Where in the rose discern the soul ?

v

More mindless still, stream, pasture, lake,  
 The mountains yet more heartless seem,  
 And life's unceasing quest and ache  
 Only a dream within a dream.

vi

We know no more, though racked with thought  
 Than he who, in yon ch  let born,  
 Gives not the riddle, Life, a thought,  
 But lays him down and sleeps till morn.

vii

Sometimes he kneels ; I cannot kneel,  
 So suffer from a wider curse  
 Than Eden's outcasts, for I feel  
 An exile in the universe.

## viii

The rudeness of his birth enures  
 His limbs to every season's stings,  
 And, never probing, so endures  
 The sadness at the heart of things.

## ix

When lawine growls, and thunder swells,  
 Their far-off clamour sounds to me  
 But as the noise of clanging bells  
 Above a silent sanctuary.

## x

It is their silence that appals,  
 Their aspect motionless that awes,  
 When searching spirit vainly calls  
 On the effect to bare the Cause.

## xi

I get no answer, near or far ;  
 The mountains, though they soar so high,  
 And scale the pathless ether, are  
 No nearer unto God than I.

xii

There dwells nor mystery nor veil  
 Round the clear peaks no foot hath trod ;  
 I, gazing on their frontage pale,  
 See but the waning ghost of God.

xiii

Is Faith then but a drug for sleep,  
 And Hope a fondly soothing friend  
 That bids us, when it sees us weep,  
 Wait for the End that hath no end ?

xiv

Then do I hear voice unforgot  
 Wailing across the distance dim,  
 "Think, dear ! If God existeth not,  
 Why are you always seeking Him ?"

## XXIII

## i

LIKE glowing furnace of the forge,  
How the winds rise and roar, as they  
Up twisting valley, craggy gorge,  
Seek, and still seek, to storm their way ;

## ii

Then, baffled, up the open slope  
With quickening pulses scale and pant,  
Indomitably bent to cope  
With bristling fronts of adamant.

## iii

All through the day resounds the strife,  
Then doth at sunset hour subside :  
So the fierce passions of our life  
Slowly expire at eventide.

iv

By Nature we are ne'er misled ;  
We see most truly when we dream.  
A singer wise was he who said,  
"Follow the gleam ! Follow the gleam !"

## XXIV

## i

I DREAMED, last night, again I stood,  
Silent, without the village shrine,  
While She in modest maidenhood  
Left, fondly clasped, her hand in mine.

## ii

And, with a face as cerecloth white,  
And tears like those that by the bier  
Of loved one lost make dim the sight,  
She poured her sorrows in mine ear.

## iii

"I love your voice, I love your gaze,  
But there is something dearer still,  
The faith that kneels, the hope that prays,  
And bows before the Heavenly Will.

iv

“ Not where hills rise, or torrents roll,  
 Seek Him, nor yet alone, apart ;  
 He dwells within the troubled soul,  
 His home is in the human heart.

v

“ Withal, the peaceful mountains may  
 ’Twixt doubt and yearning end the strife :  
 So ponder, though you cannot pray,  
 And think some meaning into life :

vi

“ Nor like to those that cross the main  
 To wander witless through strange land,  
 Hearing unmastered tongues, disdain  
 The speech they do not understand.

vii

“ Firm stands my faith that they who sound  
 The depths of doubt Faith yet will save :  
 They are like children playing round  
 A still remembered mother’s grave ;

## viii

“Not knowing, when they wax more old,  
And somewhat can her vision share,  
She will the winding-sheet unfold,  
And beckon them to evening prayer.”

## ix

Then, with my hand betwixt her hands,  
She laid her lips upon my brow,  
And, as to one who understands,  
Said, “Take once more my vestal vow.

## x

“No other gaze makes mine to glow,  
No other footstep stirs my heart,  
To me you only dearer grow,  
Dearer and nearer, more apart.

## xi

“Whene’er you come with humble mind,  
The little Door stands open wide,  
And, bending low, you still will find  
Me waiting on the other side.”

xii

Her silence woke me. . . . To your breast  
Fold me, O sleep ! and seal mine ears ;  
That She may roam through my unrest  
Till all my dreams are drenched with tears !

## XXV

## i

WHY linger longer, subject, here,  
Where Nature sits and reigns alone,  
Inspiring love not, only fear,  
Upon her autocratic throne ?

## ii

Her edicts are the rigid snow,  
The wayward winds, the swaying branch ;  
She hath no pity to bestow,  
Her law the lawless avalanche.

## iii

Though soon cascades will bound and sing,  
That now but drip with tears of ice,  
And upland meadows touched by Spring  
Blue gentian blend with edelweiss,

iv

Hence to the Land of youthful dreams,  
The Land that taught me all I know.  
Farewell, lone mountain-peaks and streams ;  
Yet take my thanks before I go.

v

You gave me shelter when I fled,  
But sternly bade me stem my tears,  
Nor aimless roam with rustling tread  
'Mong fallen leaves of fruitless years.



# ITALY



## XXVI

### i

UPON the topmost wheel-track steep,  
The parting of two nations' ways,  
Athwart stone cross engraven deep,  
The name "ITALIA" greets the gaze !

### ii

I trembled, when I saw it first,  
With joy, my boyish longings fed,  
The headspring of my constant thirst,  
The altar of my pilgrim tread.

### iii

Now once again the magic word,  
So faintly borne to Northern home,  
Sounds like a silvery trumpet heard  
Beneath some universal dome.

## iv

The forests soften to a smile,  
A smile the very mountains wear,  
Through mossy gorge and grassed defile  
Torrents race glad and debonair.

## v

From casement, balcony and door,  
Hang golden gourds, droops tear-tipped vine,  
And sun-bronzed faces bask before  
Thin straw-swathed flasks of last year's wine.

## vi

Unyoked, the patient sleek-skinned steers  
Take, like their lords, no heed of time.  
Hark ! now the evening star appears,  
Ave Maria belfries chime.

## vii

The maidens knit, and glance, and sing,  
With glowing gaze 'neath ebon tress,  
And, like to copse-buds sunned by Spring,  
Seem burgeoning into tenderness.

## viii

On waveless lake where willows weep,  
The Borromean Islands rest  
As motionless as babe asleep  
Upon a slumbering Mother's breast.

## ix

O Land of sunshine, song, and Love !  
Whether thy children reap or sow,  
Of Love they chant on hills above,  
Of Love they sing in vale below.

## x

But what avail the love-linked hands,  
And love-lit eyes, to them that roam  
Passionless through impassioned lands,  
Since they have left their heart at home !

## XXVII

## i

AMONG my dreams, now known as dreams  
 In this my reawakened life,  
 I thought that by historic streams,  
 Apart from stress, aloof from strife,

## ii

By rugged paths that twist and twine  
 Through olive slope and chesnut wood  
 Upward to mediæval shrine,  
 Or high conventual brotherhood,

## iii

Along the mountain-curtained track  
 Round peaceful lake where wintry bands  
 Halt briefly but to bivouac  
 Ere blustering on to Northern lands ;—

## iv

Through these, through all I first did see,  
With me to share my raptures none,  
That nuptialled Monica would be  
My novice and companion :

## v

That we should float from mere to mere,  
And sleep within some windless cove,  
With nightingales to lull the ear,  
From ilex wood and orange grove ;

## vi

Linger at hamlets lost to fame,  
That still wise-wandering feet beguile,  
To gaze on frescoed wall or frame  
Lit by Luini's gracious smile.

## vii

Now, but companioned by my pain,  
Among each well-remembered scene  
I can but let my Fancy feign  
The happiness that might have been ;

## viii

Imagine that I hear her voice,  
Imagine that I feel her hand,  
And I, enamoured guide, rejoice  
To see her swift to understand.

## ix

Alack ! Imagination might  
As lief with rustic Virgil roam,  
Reverent, or, welcomed guest, alight  
At Pliny's philosophic home ;

## x

Hear one majestically trace  
Rome's world-wide sway from wattled wall,  
And read upon the other's face  
The omens of an Empire's fall.

## XXVIII

## i

LIKE moonlight seen through forest leaves,  
She shines upon me from afar,  
What time men reap the ripened sheaves,  
And Heaven rains many a falling star.

## ii

I gaze up to her lofty height,  
And feel how far we dwell apart :  
O if I could, this night, this night,  
Fold her full radiance to my heart !

## iii

But She in Heaven, and I on earth,  
Still journey on, but each alone ;  
She, maiden Queen of sacred birth,  
Who with no consort shares her throne.

## XXIX

## i

WHAT if She ever thought She saw  
The self within myself prefer  
Communion with the silent awe  
Of far-off mountains more than Her ;

## ii

That Nature hath the mobile grace  
To make life with our moods agree,  
And so had grown the Loved One's face,  
Since it nor checked nor chided me ;

## iii

Or from the tasks that irk and tire  
I sought for comfort from the Muse,  
Because it grants the mind's desire  
All that familiar things refuse.

## iv

How vain such thought ! The face, the form,  
Of mountain summits but express,  
Clouded or clear, in sun or storm,  
Feebly Her spirit's loftiness.

## v

Did I explore from pole to pole,  
In Nature's aspect I should find  
But faint reflections of Her soul,  
Dim adumbrations of Her mind.

## vi

O come and test with lake, with stream,  
With mountain, which the stronger be,  
Thou, my divinest dearest dream,  
My Muse, and more than Muse, to me !

## XXX

## i

THEY tell me that Jehovah speaks  
In silent grove, on lonely strand,  
And summit of the mountain peaks ;  
Yet there I do not understand.

## ii

The stars, disdainful of my thought,  
Majestic march toward their goal,  
And to my nightly watch have brought  
No explanation to my soul.

## iii

The truth I seek I cannot find,  
In air or sky, on land or sea ;  
If the hills have their secret mind,  
They will not yield it up to me :

## iv

Like one who lost mid lonely hills  
Still seeks but cannot find his way,  
Since guide is none save winding rills,  
That seem themselves, too, gone astray.

## v

And so from rise to set of sun,  
At glimmering dawn, in twilight haze,  
I but behold the face of One  
Who veils her face, and weeps, and prays.

## vi

What know I that She doth not know ?  
What I know not, She understands :  
With heavenly gifts She overflows,  
While I have only empty hands.

## vii

O weary wanderer ! Best forego  
This questioning of wind and wave.  
For you the sunshine and the snow,  
The womb, the cradle, and the grave.

## XXXI

## i

How blest, when organ concords swell,  
And anthems are intoned, are they  
Who neither reason nor rebel,  
But meekly bow their heads and pray.

## ii

And such the peasants mountain-bred,  
Who hail to-day with blithe accord  
Her Feast Who to the Angel said,  
“Behold the Handmaid of the Lord !”

## iii

Downward they wind from pastoral height,  
Or hamlet grouped round shattered towers,  
To wend to shrine more richly dight,  
And bring their gift of wilding flowers ;

## iv

Their gifts, their griefs, their daily needs,  
And lay these at Her statue's base,  
Who never, deem they, intercedes  
Vainly before the Throne of Grace.

## v

Shall I, because I stand apart,  
A stranger to their pious vows,  
Scorn their humility of heart  
That pleads before the Virgin Spouse,

## vi

Confiding that the Son will ne'er,  
If in His justice wroth with them,  
Refuse to harken to Her prayer  
Who suckled Him in Bethlehem ?

## vii

Of all the intercessors born  
By man's celestial fancy, none  
Hath helped the sorrowing, the forlorn,  
Lowly and lone, as She hath done.

## viii

The maiden faithful to Her shrine  
Bids demons of temptation flee,  
And mothers fruitful as the vine  
Retain their vestal purity.

## ix

Too trustful love, by lust betrayed,  
And by cold worldlings unforgiven,  
Unto Her having wept and prayed,  
Faces its fate, consoled and shriven.

## x

The restless, fiercely probing mind  
No honey gleans, though still it stings.  
What comfort doth the spirit find .  
In Reason's endless reasonings ?

## xi

They have no solace for my grief,  
Compassion none for all my pain :  
They toss me like the fluttering leaf,  
And leave me to the wind and rain.

## XXXII

## i

IF Conscience be God's Law to Man,  
 Then Conscience must perforce arraign  
 Whatever falls beneath the ban  
 Of that allotted Suzerain.

## ii

And He, who bids us not to swerve,  
 Whither the wayward passions draw,  
 From its stern sanctions, must observe  
 The limits of the self-same Law.

## iii

Yet, if obedient Conscience scan  
 The sum of wrongs endured and done  
 Neither by act nor fault of Man,  
 They rouse it to rebellion.

## iv

Life seems of life by life bereft  
 Through some immitigable curse,  
 And Man sole moral being left  
 In a non-moral Universe.

## v

My Conscience would my Will withstand,  
 Did Will project a world like this :  
 Better Eternal vacuum still,  
 Than murder, lust, and heartlessness !

## vi

If Man makes Conscience, then being good  
 Is only being worldly wise,  
 And universal brotherhood  
 A comfortable compromise.

## vii

O smoke of War ! O blood-steeped sod !  
 O groans of fratricidal strife !  
 Who will explain the ways of God,  
 That I may be at peace with life !

## viii

The moral riddle 'tis that haunts,  
Primeval and unending curse,  
Racking the mind when pulpit vaunts  
A Heaven-created Universe.

## ix

Yet whence came Life, and how begin ?  
Rolleth the globe by choice or chance ?  
Dear Lord ! Why longer shut me in  
This prison-house of ignorance !



## FLORENCE



### XXXIII

i

Crry acclaimed ere Dante's days  
Fair, and baptized in field of flowers,  
Once more I scan with tender gaze  
Your glistening domes, your storied towers.

ii

I feel as if long years had flown  
Since first with eager heart I came,  
And, girdled by your mountain zone,  
Found you yet fairer than your fame.

iii

It was the season purple-sweet  
When figs are plump, and grapes are pressed,  
And all your sons with following feet  
Bore a dead Poet to final rest.

## iv

You seemed to fling your gates ajar,  
And softly lead me by the hand,  
Saying, "Behold ! henceforth you are  
No stranger in the Tuscan land."

## v

And though no love my love can wean  
From native crag and cradling sea,  
Yet Florence from that hour hath been  
More than a foster-nurse to me.

## vi

When mount I terraced slopes arrayed  
In bridal bloom of peach and pear,  
While under olive's phantom shade  
Lupine and beanflower scent the air,

## vii

The wild-bees hum round golden bay,  
The green frog sings on fig-tree bole,  
And, see ! down daisy-whitened way  
Come the slow steers and swaying pole.

## viii

The fresh-pruned vine-stems, curving, bend  
Over the peaceful wheaten spears,  
And with the glittering sunshine blend  
Their transitory April tears.

## ix

O'er wall and trellis trailed and wound,  
Hang roses blushing, roses pale ;  
And, hark ! what was that silvery sound ?  
The first note of the nightingale.

## x

Curtained, I close my lids and dream  
Of Beauty seen not but surmised,  
And, lulled by scent and song, I seem  
Immortally imparadised.

## xi

When from the deep sweet swoon I wake  
And gaze past slopes of grape and grain,  
Where Arno, like some lonely lake,  
Silvers the far-off seaward plain,

## xii

I see celestial sunset fires  
That lift us from this earthly leaven,  
And darkly silent cypress spires  
Pointing the way from hill to Heaven.

## xiii

Then something more than mortal steals  
Over the wavering twilight air,  
And, messenger of nightfall, peals  
From each crowned peak a call to prayer.

## xiv

And now the last meek prayer is said,  
And, in the hallowed hush, there is  
Only a starry dome o'erhead,  
Propped by columnar cypresses.

XXXIV

i

RE-ROAMING through this palaced town,  
 I suddenly, 'neath grim-barred pile,  
 Catch sight of Dante's awful frown,  
 Or Leonardo's mystic smile ;

ii

Then, swayed by memory's fancy, stroll  
 To where from May-day's flaming pyre  
 Savonarola's austere soul  
 Went up to Heaven in tongues of fire ;

iii

Or Buonarroti's plastic hand  
 Made marble block from Massa's steep  
 Dawn into Day at his command,  
 Then plunged it into Night and Sleep.

iv

No later wanderings can dispel  
The glamour of the bygone years ;  
And, through the streets I know so well,  
I scarce can see my way for tears.

XXXV

i

A SOMBRE shadow seems to fall  
 On comely altar, transept fair ;  
 The saints are still on frescoed wall,  
 But who comes thither now for prayer ?

ii

Men throng from far-off stranger land,  
 To stare, to wonder, not to kneel,  
 With map and guide-book in their hand  
 To tell them what to think and feel.

iii

They scan, they prate, they marvel why  
 The figures still expressive glow,  
 Oblivious they were painted by  
 Adoring Frà Angelico.

## iv

Did Dante from his tomb afar  
Return, his wrongs redressed at last,  
And see you, Florence, as you are,  
Half alien to your gracious Past,

## v

Finding no Donatello now,  
No reverent Giotto 'mong the quick,  
To glorify ascetic vow  
Of Francis or of Dominic ;

## vi

Self-exiled by yet sterner fate  
Than erst, he would from wandering cease,  
And, ringing at monastic gate,  
Plead, "I am one who craves for peace."

## vii

And what he sought but ne'er could find,  
Shall I, less worthy, hope to gain,  
The freedom of the tranquil mind,  
The lordship over loss and pain ?

viii

More than such peace I found when I  
Did first, in unbound youth, repair  
To Tuscan shrine, Ausonian sky.  
I found it, for I brought it there.

## XXXVI

## i

YET Art brings peace, itself is Peace,  
 And, as I on these frescoes gaze,  
 I feel all fretful tumults cease  
 And harvest calm of mellow days.

## ii

For Soul too hath its seasons. Time,  
 That leads Spring, Summer, Autumn, round,  
 Makes our ephemeral passions chime  
 With something permanent and profound.

## iii

And, as in Nature, April oft  
 Strives to revert to wintry hours,  
 But shortly upon garth and croft  
 Re-sheds warm smiles and moistening  
 showers,

## iv

Or, for one day, will Autumn wear  
 The gayer garments of the Spring,  
 And then athwart the wheatfields bare  
 Again her graver shadows fling ;

## v

So, though the Soul hath moods that veer,  
 And seem to hold no Rule in awe,  
 Like the procession of the year,  
 It too obeys the sovran Law.

## vi

Nor Art itself brings settled peace,  
 Until the mind is schooled to know  
 That gusts subside and tumults cease  
 Only in sunset's afterglow.

## vii

Life's contradictions vanish then,  
 Husht thought replacing clashing talk  
 Among the windy ways of men.  
 'Tis in the twilight Angels walk.



# ROME



## XXXVII

### i

THE last warm gleams of sunset fade  
From cypress spire and stonepine dome,  
And, in the twilight's deepening shade,  
Lingering, I scan the wrecks of Rome.

### ii

Husht the Madonna's Evening Bell ;  
The steers lie loosed from wain and plough ;  
The vagrant monk is in his cell,  
The meek nun-novice cloistered now.

### iii

Pedant's presumptuous voice no more  
Vexes the spot where Cæsar trod,  
And o'er the pavement's soundless floor  
Come banished priest and exiled God.

## iv

The lank-ribbed she-wolf, couched among  
The regal hillside's tangled scrubs,  
With dotting gaze and fondling tongue  
Suckles the Vestal's twin-born cubs.

## v

Yet once again Evander leads  
Æneas to his wattled home,  
And, throned on Tiber's fresh-cut reeds,  
Talks of burnt Troy and rising Rome.

## vi

From out the tawny dusk one hears  
The half-feigned scream of Sabine maids,  
The rush to arms, then swift the tears  
That separate the clashing blades.

## vii

The Lictors with their fasces throng  
To quell the Commons' rising roar,  
As Tullia's chariot flames along,  
Splashed with her murdered father's gore.

viii

Her tresses free from band or comb,  
 Love-dimpled Venus, lithe and tall,  
 And fresh as Fiumicino's foam,  
 Mounts her pentelic pedestal.

ix

With languid lids, and lips apart,  
 And curving limbs like wave half-furled,  
 Unarmed she dominates the heart,  
 And without sceptre sways the world.

x

Nerved by her smile, avenging Mars  
 Stalks through the Forum's fallen fanes,  
 Or, changed of mien and healed of scars,  
 Threads sylvan slopes and vineyard plains.

xi

With waves of song from wakening lyre  
 Apollo routs the wavering night,  
 While, parsley-crowned, the white-robed choir  
 Wind chanting up the Sacred Height,

## xii

Where Jove, with thunder-garlands wreathed,  
And crisp locks frayed like fretted foam,  
Sits with his lightnings half unsheathed,  
And frowns against the foes of Rome.

## xiii

You cannot kill the Gods. They still  
Reclaim the thrones where once they reigned,  
Rehaunt the grove, remount the rill,  
And renovate their rites profaned.

## xiv

Diana's hounds still lead the chase,  
Still Neptune's Trident crests the sea,  
And still man's spirit soars through space  
On feathered heels of Mercury.

## xv

No flood can quench the Vestals' Fire ;  
The Flamen's robes are still as white  
As ere the Salii's armoured choir  
Were drowned by droning anchorite.

## xvi

The saint may seize the siren's seat,  
 The shaveling frown where frisked the Faun ;  
 Ne'er will, though all beside should fleet,  
 The Olympian Presence be withdrawn.

## xvii

Here, even in the noontide glare,  
 The Gods, recumbent, take their ease ;  
 Go look, and you will find them there,  
 Slumbering behind some fallen frieze.

## xviii

But most, when sunset glow hath paled,  
 And come, as now, the twilight hour,  
 In vesper vagueness dimly veiled  
 I feel their presence and their power.

## xix

What though their temples strew the ground,  
 And to the ruin owls repair,  
 Their home, their haunt, is all around ;  
 They drive the cloud, they ride the air.

## xx

And, when the planets wend their way  
Along the never-ageing skies,  
“Revere the Gods ” I hear them say ;  
“The Gods are old, the Gods are wise.”

## xxi

Build as man may, Time gnaws and peers  
Through marble fissures, granite rents ;  
Only Imagination rears  
Imperishable monuments.

## xxii

Let Gaul and Goth pollute the shrine,  
Level the altar, fire the fane :  
There is no razing the Divine ;  
The Gods return, the Gods remain.

XXXVIII

i

CHRIST is arisen. The place wherein  
They laid Him shows but cerements furled,  
And belfry answers belfry's din  
To ring the tidings round the world.

ii

Grave Hierarchs come, an endless band,  
In jewelled mitre, cope embossed,  
Who bear Rome's will to every land  
In all the tongues of Pentecost.

iii

Majestic, along marble floor,  
Walk Cardinals in blood-red robe,  
Martyrs for Faith and Christ no more,  
Who gaze as though they ruled the globe.

## iv

With halberds bare and doublets slashed,  
 Emblems that war will never cease,  
 Come martial guardians, unabashed,  
 And march afront the Prince of Peace.

## v

Then, in his gestatorial Chair  
 See Christ's vicegerent, bland, benign,  
 To crowds all prostrate as in prayer  
 Lean low, and make the Holy Sign.

## vi

Then trumpets shrill, and organ peals,  
 Throughout the mighty marble pile,  
 Whileas a myriad concourse kneels  
 In dense-packed nave and crowded aisle.

## vii

Hark to the sudden hush ! Aloft  
 From unseen source in empty dome  
 Swells prayerful music silvery-soft,  
 Borne from far-off celestial Home.

viii

Then, when the solemn rite is done,  
 The worshippers stream out to where  
 Dance fountains glittering in the sun,  
 While expectation fills the air.

ix

Now on high balcony He stands,  
 And—save for the Colonna curse,—  
 Blesses with high-uplifted hands  
 The City and the Universe.

x

Christ is arisen ! But scarce as when,  
 On the third day of death and gloom,  
 Came ever-loving Magdalen  
 With tears and spices to His tomb.

## XXXIX

## i

THE Tiber winds its sluggish way  
 Through niggard tracts whence Rome's  
     command  
 Once cast the shadow of her sway,  
     O'er Asian city, Afric sand.

## ii

Nor even yet doth She resign  
     Her sceptre. Still the spell is hers,  
 Though she may seem a rifled shrine  
     'Mid circumjacent sepulchres.

## iii

One after one, they came, they come,  
     Gaul, Goth, Savoy, to work their will ;  
 She answers, when She most seems dumb,  
     " I wore the Crown, I wear it still.

iv

“ From Jove I first received the gift,  
     I from Jehovah wear it now,  
 Nor shall profane invader lift  
     The diadem from off my brow.

v

“ The Past is mine, and on the Past  
     The Future builds ; and Time will rear  
 The next strong structure on the last,  
     Where men behold but shattered tier.

vi

“ The Teuton hither hies to teach,  
     To prove, disprove, to delve and probe.  
 Fool ! Pedant ! Does he think to reach  
     The deep foundations of the globe ? ”

vii

For me, I am content to tread  
     On Sabine dust and Gothic foe.  
 Leave me to deepening silent dread  
     Of vanished Empire's afterglow.

viii

In this Imperial wilderness  
Why rashly babble and explore ?  
O, let me know a little less,  
So I may feel a little more !

XL

i

For upward of one thousand years,  
 Here men and women prayed to Jove,  
 With smiles and incense, gifts and tears,  
 In secret shrine, or civic grove ;

ii

And, when Jove did not seem to heed,  
 Sought Juno's mediatorial power,  
 Or begged fair Venus intercede  
 And melt him in his amorous hour.

iii

Sages invoked Minerva's might ;  
 The Poet, ere he struck the lyre,  
 Prayed to the God of Song and Light  
 To touch the strings with hallowed fire.

iv

With flaming herbs were altars smoked  
 Sprinkled with blood and perfumed must,  
 And gods and goddesses invoked  
 To second love or sanction lust.

v

And did they hear and heed the prayer,  
 Or, through that long Olympian reign,  
 Were they divinities of air  
 Begot of man's fantastic brain ?

vi

In Roman halls their statues still  
 Serenely stand, but no one now  
 Ascends the Capitolian Hill,  
 To render thanks, or urge the vow.

vii

Through now long centuries hath Rome  
 Throned other God, preached other Creed,  
 That here still have their central home,  
 And feed man's hope, content his need.

viii

Against these, too, will Time prevail ?

No ! Let whatever gestates, be,  
Secure will last the tender tale  
From Bethlehem to Calvary.

ix

Throughout this world of pain and loss,  
Man ne'er will cease to bend his knee  
To Crown of Thorns, to Spear, to Cross,  
And Doorway of Humility.

XLI

i

If Reason be the sole safe guide  
 In man implanted from above,  
 Why crave we for one only face,  
 Why consecrate the name of Love ?

ii

Faces there are no whit less fair,  
 Yet ruddier lip, more radiant eye,  
 Same rippling smile, same auburn hair,  
 But not for us. Say, Reason, why.

iii

Why bound our hearts when April pied  
 Comes singing, or when hawthorn blows ?  
 Doth logic in the lily hide,  
 And where's the reason in the rose ?

iv

Why weld our keels and launch our ships,  
 If Reason urge some wiser part,  
 Kiss England's Flag with dying lips  
 And fold its glories to the heart ?

v

In this gross world we touch and see,  
 If Reason be no trusty guide,  
 For world unseen why should it be  
 The sole explorer justified ?

vi

The homing swallow knows its nest,  
 Sure curves the comet to its goal,  
 Instinct leads Autumn to its rest,  
 And why not Faith the homing soul ?

vii

Is Reason so aloof, aloft,  
 It doth not 'gainst itself rebel,  
 And are not Reason's reasonings oft  
 By Reason proved unreasonable ?

viii

He is perplexed no more, who prays,  
    “ Hail, Mary Mother, full of grace ! ”  
O drag me from Doubt's endless maze,  
    And let me see my Loved One's face !

XLII

i

“UPON this rock !” Yet even here  
Where Christian God ousts Pagan wraith,  
Rebellious Reason whets its spear,  
And smites upon the shield of Faith.

ii

On sacred mount, down seven-hilled slopes,  
Fearless it faces foe and friend,  
Saying to man's immortal hopes,  
“Whatso began, perforce must end.”

iii

Not men alone, but gods too, die ;  
Fanes are, like hearths, left bare and lone ;  
This earth will into fragments fly,  
And Heaven itself be overthrown.

## iv

Why then should Man immortal be ?  
 He is but fleeting form, to fade,  
 Like momentary cloud, or sea  
 Of waves dispersed as soon as made.

## v

Yet if 'tis Force, not Form, survives,  
 Meseems therein that one may find  
 Some comfort for distressful lives ;  
 For, if Force ends not, why should Mind ?

## vi

Is Doubt more forceful than Belief ?  
 The doctor's cap than friar's cowl ?  
 O ripeness of the falling leaf !  
 O wisdom of the moping owl !

## vii

Man's Mind will ever stand apart  
 From Science, save this have for goal  
 The evolution of the heart,  
 And sure survival of the Soul.

XLIII

i

THE Umbilicum lonely stands  
Where once rose porch and vanished dome ;  
But he discerns who understands  
That every road may lead to Rome.

ii

Enthroned in Peter's peaceful Chair,  
The spiritual Cæsar sways  
A wider Realm of earth and air  
Than trembled at Octavian's gaze.

iii

His universal arms embrace  
The saint, the sinner, and the sage,  
And proffer refuge, comfort, grace  
To tribulation's pilgrimage.

## iv

Here scientific searchers find  
Precursors for two thousand years,  
Who in a drouthy world divined  
Fresh springs for human doubts and fears.

## v

Here fair chaste Agnes veils her face  
From prowlers of the sensual den,  
And pity, pardon, and embrace  
Await repentant Magdalen.

## vi

Princess and peasant-mother wend  
To self-same altar, self-same shrine,  
And Cardinal and Patriarch bend  
Where lepers kneel, and beggars whine.

## vii

And is there then, in my distress,  
No road, no gate, no shrine, for me ?  
The answer comes, " Yes, surely, yes !  
The Doorway of Humility."

viii

O rival Faiths ! O clamorous Creeds !  
Would you but hush your strife in prayer,  
And raise one Temple for our needs,  
Then, then, we all might worship there.

ix

But dogma new with dogma old  
Clashes to soothe the spirit's grief,  
And offer to the unconsolated  
Polyglot Babel of Belief !

## XLIV

## i

THE billows roll, and rise, and break,  
Around me ; fixedly shine the stars  
In clear dome overhead, and take  
Their course, unheeding earthly jars.

## ii

Yet if one's upward gaze could be  
But stationed where the planets are,  
The star were restless as the sea,  
The sea be tranquil as the star.

## iii

Hollowed like cradle, then like grave,  
Now smoothly curved, now shapeless spray,  
Withal the undirected wave  
Forms, and reforms, and knows its way.

iv

Then, waters, bear me on where He,  
Ere death absolved at Christian font,  
Removed Rome's menaced majesty  
Eastward beyond the Hellespont.

v

Foreseeing not what Fate concealed,  
But Time's caprice would there beget,  
That Cross would unto Crescent yield,  
Cæsar and Christ to Mahomet.

vi

Is it then man's predestined state  
To search for, ne'er to find, the Light ?  
Arise, my Star, illuminate  
These empty spaces of the Night !

## XLV

## i

LAST night I heard the cuckoo call  
Among the moist green glades of home,  
And in the Chase around the Hall  
Saw the May hawthorn flower and foam.

## ii

Deep in the wood where primrose stars  
Paled before bluebell's dazzling reign,  
The nightingale's sad sobbing bars  
Rebuked the merle's too joyful strain.

## iii

The kine streamed forth from stall and byre,  
The foal frisked round its mother staid,  
The meads, by sunshine warmed, took fire,  
And lambs in pasture, bleating, played.

iv

The uncurbed rivulets raced to where  
 The statelier river curled and wound,  
 And trout, of human step aware,  
 Shot through the wave without a sound.

v

Adown the village street, as clear  
 As in one's wakeful mid-day hours,  
 Beheld I Monica drawing near,  
 Her vestal lap one crib of flowers.

vi

Lending no look to me, she passed  
 By the stone path, as oft before,  
 Between old mounds Spring newly grassed,  
 And entered through the Little Door.

vii

Led by her feet, I hastened on,  
 But, ere my feverish steps could get  
 To the low porch, lo ! Morning shone  
 On Moslem dome and minaret !



# CONSTANTINOPLE



## XLVI

### i

Now Vesper brings the sunset hour,  
And, where crusading Knighthood trod,  
Muezzin from his minaret tower  
Proclaims, "There is no God but God !"

### ii

Male God who shares his godhead with  
No Virgin Mother's sacred tear,  
But finds on earth congenial kith  
In wielders of the sword and spear :

### iii

Male God who on male lust bestows  
The ruddy lip, the rounded limb,  
And promises, at battle's close,  
Houri, not saint nor seraphim.

## iv

Swift through the doubly-guarded stream,  
Shoots the caïque 'neath oarsmen brisk,  
While from its cushioned cradle gleam  
The eyes of yashmaked odalisque.

## v

Unchanged adown the changing years,  
Here where the Judas blossoms blaze,  
Against Sophia's marble piers  
The scowling Muslim lean and gaze ;

## vi

And still at sunset's solemn hour,  
Where Christ's devout Crusader trod,  
Defiant from the minaret's tower  
Proclaim, "There is no God but God !"

XLVII

i

THREE rival Rituals. One revered  
In that loved English hamlet where,  
With flowers in Vicarage garden reared,  
She decks the altar set for prayer :

ii

Another, where majestic Rome,  
With fearless Faith and flag unfurled  
'Gainst Doubt's ephemeral wave and foam,  
Demands obedience from the world.

iii

The third, where now I stand, and where  
Two hoary Continents have met,  
And Islam guards from taint and tare  
Monistic Creed of Mahomet.

## iv

Yet older than all three, but banned  
To suffer still the exile's doom  
From shrine where Turkish sentries stand,  
And Christians wrangle round Christ's tomb.

## v

Where then find Creed, divine or dead,  
All may embrace, and none contemn ?—  
Remember Who it was that said,  
“Not here, nor at Jerusalem !”

# ATHENS



## XLVIII

### i

To Acrocorinth's brow I climb,  
And, lulled in retrospective bliss,  
Descry, as through the mists of time,  
Faintly the far Acropolis.

### ii

Below me, rivers, mountains, vales,  
Wide stretch of ancient Hellas lies :  
Symbol of Song that never fails,  
Parnassus communes with the skies.

### iii

I linger, dream-bound by the Past,  
Till sundown joins time's deep abyss,  
Then skirt, through shadows moonlight-cast,  
Lone strand of sailless Salamis,

## iv

Until Eleusis gleams through dawn,  
Where, though a suppliant soul I come,  
The veil remains still unwithdrawn,  
And all the Oracles are dumb.

## v

So onward to the clear white Light,  
Where, though the worshippers be gone,  
Abides on unmysterious height  
The calm unquestioning Parthenon.

## vi

Find I, now there I stand at last,  
That naked Beauty, undraped Truth,  
Can satisfy our yearnings vast,  
The doubts of age, the dreams of youth ;

## vii

That, while we ask, in futile strife,  
From altar, tripod, fount, or well,  
Form is the secret soul of life,  
And Art the only Oracle ;

viii

That Hera and Athena, linked  
 With Aphrodite, hush distress,  
 And, in their several gifts distinct,  
 Withal are Triune Goddesses ?

ix

That mortal wiser then was He  
 Who gave the prize to Beauty's smile,  
 Divides his gifts among the Three,  
 And thuswise baffles Discord's guile ?

x

But who is wise ? The nobler twain,  
 Who the restraining girdle wear,  
 Contend too often all in vain  
 With sinuous curve and frolic hair.

xi

Just as one sees in marble, still,  
 Pan o'er Apollo's shoulder lean,  
 Suggesting to the poet's quill  
 The sensual note, the hint obscene.

xii

Doth then the pure white Light grow dim,  
And must it be for ever thus ?  
Listen ! I hear a far-off Hymn,  
*Veni, Creator, Spiritus !*

XLIX

i

THE harvest of Hymettus drips  
 As sweet as when the Attic bees  
 Swarmed round the honey-laden lips  
 Of heavenly-human Sophocles.

ii

The olives are as green in grove  
 As in the days the poets bless,  
 When Pallas with Poseidon strove  
 To be the City's Patroness.

iii

The wine-hued main, white marble frieze,  
 Dome of blue ether over all,  
 One still beholds, but nowhere sees  
 Panathenaic Festival.

## iv

O'erhead, no Zeus or frowns or nods,  
 Olympus none in air or skies ;  
 Below, a sepulchre of Gods,  
 And tombs of dead Divinities.

## v

Yet, *are* they dead ? Still stricken blind,  
 Tiresiaslike, are they that see,  
 With bold uncompromising mind,  
 Wisdom in utter nudity ;

## vi

Experiencing a kindred fate  
 With the First Parents of us all,  
 Jehovah thrust through Eden's Gate,  
 When Knowledge brought about their Fall.

## vii

[[ Hath Aphrodite into foam,  
 Whence She first flowered, sunk back once  
 more,  
 And doth She nowhere find a home,  
 Or worship, upon Christian shore ?

viii

Her shrine is in the human breast,  
 To find her none need soar or dive.  
 Goodness or Loveliness our quest,  
 The ever-helpful Gods survive.

ix

Hellas retorts, when Hebrew gibes  
 At Gods of levity and lust,  
 "God of Judæa's wandering tribes  
 Was jealous, cruel, and unjust."

x

Godhead, withal, remains the same,  
 And Art embalms its symbols still ;  
 As Poets, when athirst for Fame,  
 Still dream of Aganippe's rill.

## L

## i

WHY still pursue a bootless quest,  
 And wander heartsore farther East,  
 Because unanswered, south or west,  
 By Pagan seer or Christian priest ?

## ii

Brahma and Buddha, what have they  
 To offer to my shoreless search ?  
 "Let Contemplation be," they say,  
 "Your ritual, Nothingness your Church.

## iii

"Passion and purpose both forsake,  
 Echoes from non-existent wall ;  
 We do but dream we are awake,  
 Ourselves the deepest dream of all.

iv

“ We dream we think, feel, touch, and see,  
And what these are, still dreaming, guess,  
Though there is no Reality  
Behind their fleeting semblances.”

v

Thus the East answers my appeal,  
Denies, and so illudes, my want.  
Alas ! Could I but cease to feel,  
Brahma should be my Hierophant.

vi

But, hampered by my Western mind,  
I cannot set the Spirit free  
From Matter, but Illusion find,  
Of all, the most illusory.



## DELPHI



## LI

### i

THE morning mists that hid the bay  
And curtained mountains fast asleep,  
Begin to feel the touch of day,  
And roll from off both wave and steep.

### ii

In floating folds they curve and rise,  
Then slowly melt and merge in air,  
Till high above me glow the skies,  
And cloudless sunshine everywhere.

### iii

Parnassus wears nor veil nor frown,  
Windless the eagle wings his way,  
As I from Delphi gaze adown  
On Salona and Amphissà.

## iv

It was the sovran Sun that drew  
Aloft and scattered morning haze,  
And now fills all the spacious blue  
With its own glorifying rays.

## v

And, no less sovran than the sun,  
Imagination brings relief  
Of morning light to shadows dun,  
To heart's distress, and spirit's grief.

## vi

Parnassus boasts no loftier peak  
Than Poet's heavenward song ; which, though  
Harbouring among the sad and weak,  
Lifteth aloft man's griefs below.

## vii

Though sun-bronzed Phocian maidens lave  
Their kerchiefs in Castalia's spring,  
The Muses linger round its wave,  
And aid the pilgrim sent to sing.

viii

And, listening there, I seem to hear  
The unseen Oracle say, " Be strong :  
Subdue the sigh, repress the tear,  
And let not sorrow silence Song.

ix

" You now have learnt enough from pain ;  
And, if worse anguish lurk behind,  
Breathe in it some unselfish strain,  
And with grief's wisdom aid your kind.

x

" Who but of his own suffering sings,  
Is like an eagle, robbed, distressed,  
That vainly shrieks and beats its wings,  
Because it cannot find its nest.

xi

" Let male Imagination wed  
The orphan, Sorrow, to console  
Its virgin liveness, whence are bred  
Serenity and self-control.

xii

“ Hence let the classic breezes blow  
    You to your Land beyond the sea,  
    That you may make, for others’ woe,  
    Your own a healing melody ;

xiii

“ To wintry woe no more a slave,  
    But, having dried your April tears,  
    Behold a helpful harvest wave  
    From ridges of the fallow years.”

LII

i

REBUKED thus by the stately Past,  
Whose solemn choruses endure  
Through voices new and visions vast,  
And centuries of sepulture,

ii

Because, serene, it never blinked  
At sheen or shadow of the sun,  
But Hades and Olympus linked  
With Salamis and Marathon ;

iii

Which held despondency at bay  
And, while revering Fate's decree,  
Reconciled with majestic lay  
Man to the Human Tragedy ;

## iv

To Gods of every land I vowed,  
 Judæa, Hellas, Mecca, Rome,  
 No more to live by sorrow bowed,  
 But, wending backward to my home,

## v

Thenceforth to muse on woe more wide  
 Than individual distress,  
 The loftier Muses for my guide,  
 Minerva for my monitress ;

## vi

Nor yet to scorn the tender aid  
 Of Christian martyr, virgin, sage,  
 And, meekly pondering in the shade,  
 Proffer ripe counsel to my Age.

## vii

And, haply, since 'tis Song alone  
 Can baffle death, and conquer time,  
 Maiden unborn in days unknown,  
 Under the leaves of fragrant lime,

viii

Scanning the verse that here is writ,  
While cherishing some secret smart  
Of love or loss, may glean from it  
Some comfort for her weary heart ;

ix

And, gently warned, grave minds may own  
The world hath more to bear than they,  
And, while I dream 'neath mossy stone,  
Repeat my name, and love my lay.

LIII

i

SCARCE to the all-indwelling Power  
 That vow was uttered, ere there came  
 A messenger in boyhood's flower,  
 Winged with his search, his face aflame.

ii

From Amphissà he straight had clomb,  
 Thridding that devious mountain land,  
 With letter from my far-off home,  
 And written by my Loved One's hand.

iii

"Come to me where I drooping lie.  
 None yet have died of Love, they say :  
 Withal, I sometimes think that I  
 Have prayed and sighed my life away.

iv

“ I want your absolution, dear,  
For whatso wrong I may have done ;  
My conscience waneth less severe,  
In softness of the setting sun.

v

“ 'Twas I, 'twas I, far more than you,  
That stood in need, as now I see,  
Stooping, to enter meekly through  
The Doorway of Humility.

vi

“ In vain I turn to Throne of Grace,  
Where sorrows cease, and tears are dry ;  
I fain once more would see your face,  
And hear your voice, before I die.”



# ENGLAND



## LIV

### i

THE oak logs smoulder on my hearth,  
Though round them hums no household talk ;  
The roses in the garden-garth  
Hang mournfully on curving stalk.

### ii

My wolf-hound round me leaps and bays,  
That wailed lost footsteps when I went :  
He little knows the grief that weighs  
On my return from banishment.

### iii

Half Autumn now, half Summer yet,  
For Nature hath a human heart,  
It seems as though they, having met,  
To take farewell, are loth to part.

## iv

The splendour of the Year's decline  
 Hath not yet come. One still can see  
 Late honeysuckle intertwine  
 With Maiden's-Bower and briony.

## v

The bracken-fronds, fast yellowing, tower  
 From out sere needles of the pine ;  
 Now hawkweed blooms where foxgloves flower,  
 And bramble where once eglantine.

## vi

And, as I wend with hurrying feet  
 Across the park, along the lane  
 That leads unto the hamlet street,  
 And cradle of my bliss and bane,

## vii

In cottage plots on either side,  
 O'er mignonette and fragrant stock  
 Soar tiger-lilies lithe and tall,  
 And homely-sheltered hollyhock.

viii

And when I reach the low grey wall  
 That skirts God's-acre on the hill,  
 I see, awaiting my recall,  
 The Little Door stand open still.

ix

A dip, a slight descent, and then  
 Into the Vicarage Walk I passed ;  
 It seemed as though the tongues of men  
 Had left it since I saw it last.

x

Round garden-plot, in westering sun,  
 Her agèd parents slowly stepped :  
 Her Mother had the face of one  
 Who oft hath prayed, and oft hath wept.

xi

She wore the silent plaintive grace  
 Of Autumn just before its close,  
 And on her slowly fading face  
 The pathos of November rose.

With pitying gaze and accents kind,  
    "Go in," she said, "and mount the stair ;  
And you through open door will find  
    That Monica awaits you there."

LV

i

I MOUNTED. At half-open door  
Pausing, I softly called her name,  
As one would pause and halt before  
Heaven's Gateway. But no answer came.

ii

She lies, methought, in Sleep's caress,  
So, passing in, I seemed to see,  
So saintly white the vision, less  
A chamber than a Sanctuary.

iii

Vestured in white, on snow-white bed,  
She lay, as dreaming something sweet,  
Madonna lilies at her head,  
Madonna lilies at her feet.

## iv

A thought, I did not dare to speak,—  
“Is this the sleep of life or death?”  
And, with my cheek against her cheek,  
Listening, I seemed to hear her breath.

## v

'Twas Love's last blindness not to see  
Her sinless soul had taken wing  
Unto the Land, if such there be,  
Where saints adore, and Seraphs sing.

## vi

And yet I felt within my heart,  
Though lids were closed and lips were  
dumb,  
That, for Love's sake, her soul in part  
Had lingered here, till I should come.

## vii

I kissed her irresponsive hand,  
I laid my lips on her cold brow,  
That She, like me, should understand  
'Twas thus I sealed our nuptial vow.

viii

And then I saw upon her breast  
A something writ, she fain had said  
Had I been near, to me addressed,  
Which, kneeling down, I took and read.

## LVI

## i

“ I PRAYED I might prolong my years  
 Till you could come and hush my sighs,  
 And dry my penitential tears ;  
 But Heaven hath willed it otherwise :

## ii

“ That I may expiate the wrong  
 By me inflicted on us both,  
 When, yet Love's novice, feebly strong,  
 I sinned against Love's sovran troth.

## iii

“ Now Death, the mirror unto Life,  
 Shows me that nought should keep apart  
 Those who, though sore perplexed by strife  
 'Twixt Faith and Doubt, are one in heart.

iv

“ For Doubt is one with Faith when they,  
    Who doubt, for Truth’s sake suffering live ;  
And Faith meanwhile should hope and pray,  
    Withholding not what Love can give.

v

“ We lead the blind by voice and hand,  
    And not by light they cannot see ;  
We are not framed to understand  
    The How and Why of such as He,

vi

“ But natured only to rejoice  
    At every sound or sign of hope,  
And, guided by the still small voice,  
    In patience through the darkness grope ;

vii

“ Until our finer sense expands,  
    And we exchange for holier sight  
The earthly help of voice and hands,  
    And in His light behold the Light.

## viii

“ Had my poor Love but been more wise,  
I should have ta'en you to my breast,  
Striving to hush your plaintive cries,  
And rock your Reason back to rest.

## ix

“ But, though alone you now must tread  
Where we together should have trod,  
In loneliness you may be led,  
Through faith in me, to Faith in God.

## x

“ With tranquil purpose, fervent mind,  
Foster, while you abide on earth,  
And humbly proffer to your kind,  
The gift assigned to you at birth.

## xi

“ As in the far-off boyish year  
When did your singing voice awake,  
Disinterestedly revere  
And love it for its own great sake.

xii

“ And when life takes autumnal hues,  
    With fervent reminiscence woo  
All the affections of the Muse,  
    And write the poem lived by you.

xiii

“ And should, until your days shall end,  
    You still the lyric voice retain,  
With its seductive music blend  
    A graver note, a loftier strain.

xiv

“ While buoyant youth and manhood strong  
    Follow where Siren sounds entice,  
The Deities of Love and Song,  
    Rapture and loveliness, suffice.

xv

“ But when decay, and pain, and loss,  
    Remind one of the Goal forgot,  
And we in turn must bear the Cross,  
    The Pagan Gods can help us not.

## xvi

“ Nor need you then seek, far and near,  
More sumptuous shrines on alien strand,  
But with domestic mind revere  
The Ritual of your native Land.

## xvii

“ The Little Door stands open wide,  
And, if you meekly pass therethrough,  
Though I no longer kneel inside,  
I shall be hovering near to you.

## xviii

“ Farewell ! till you shall learn the whole  
Of what we here but see in part.  
Now I to God commend my soul,  
And unto you I leave my heart.”

LVII

i

I WENDED up the slope once more  
To where the Church stands lone and still,  
And passed beneath the Little Door,  
My will the subject of Her will.

ii

The sunset rays through pictured pane  
Fell, fretted into weft and woof,  
On transept, nave, and aisle, to wane  
On column cold and vaulted roof.

iii

Within the carven altar screen  
Were lilies tall, and white, and fair,  
So like to those I late had seen,  
It seemed She must be sleeping there.

## iv

Mutely I knelt, with bended brow  
And shaded eyes, but heart intent,  
To learn, should any teach me now,  
What Life, and Love, and Sorrow meant.

## v

And there remained until the shroud  
Of dusk foretold the coming night ;  
And then I rose, and prayed aloud,  
“Let there be Light ! Let there be  
Light !”

THE END

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